p-ISSN : 2708-2474 | e-ISSN : 2708-2482
DOI(Journal): 10.31703/gmsr
DOI(Volume): 10.31703/gmsr/.2024(IX)
DOI(Issue): 10.31703/gmsr.2024(IX.I)

www.gmsrjournal.com

GMSR
Global Management Sciences Review
managing humanity

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GLOBAL MANAGEMENT SCIENCES REVIEW

HEC-RECOGNIZED CATEGORY-Y

VOL. IX, ISSUE I, WINTER (MARCH-2024)

Double-blind Peer-review Research Journal
www.gmsrjournal.com
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Doi:https://dx.doi.org/10.31703

Article title

Effect of Celebrity Credibility on Brand Passion and Brand Loyalty

Global Management Sciences Review

p-ISSN: 2708-2474 e-ISSN: 2708-2482
DOI(journal): 10.31703/gmsr
Volume: IX (2024)
DOI (volume): 10.31703/gmsr.2024(IX)
Issue: I (Winter-March 2024)
DOI(Issue): 10.31703/gmsr.2024(IX-I)

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https://www.gmsrjournal.com/Current-issue

Issue: I-Winter (March-2024)
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Abstract

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Keywords: Celebrity Endorser Attractiveness, Celebrity Endorser Expertise, Celebrity Endorser Trustworthiness, Brand Passion, Brand Loyalty.

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Pages: 59-75
DOI:10.31703/gssr.2024(IX-I).07
DOI link: https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gmsr.2024(IX-I).07
Article link: https://gmsrjournal.com/article/effect-of-celebrity-credibility-on-brand-passion-and-brand-loyalty
Full-text Link: https://gmsrjournal.com/fulltext/effect-of-celebrity-credibility-on-brand-passion-and-brand-loyalty
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Citing Article

07	Effect of Celebrity Credibility on Brand Passion and Brand Loyalty						
	Author	Zargham Ullah Khan Tania Arshad Naveed Alam		DOI	10.31703/gmsr.2024(IX-I).07		
Pages	59-75	Year	2024	Volume	IX	Issue	I
Referencing & Citing Styles	APA	Khan, Z. U., Arshad, T., & Alam, N. (2024). Effect of Celebrity Credibility on Brand Passion and Brand Loyalty. *Global Management Sciences Review, IX*(I), 59-75. https://doi.org/10.31703/gmsr.2024(IX-I).07					
	CHICAGO	Khan, Zargham Ullah, Tania Arshad, and Naveed Alam. 2024. "Effect of Celebrity Credibility on Brand Passion and Brand Loyalty." *Global Management Sciences Review* IX (I):59-75. doi: 10.31703/gmsr.2024(IX-I).07.					
	HARVARD	KHAN, Z. U., ARSHAD, T. & ALAM, N. 2024. Effect of Celebrity Credibility on Brand Passion and Brand Loyalty. *Global Management Sciences Review,* IX**,** 59-75.					
	MHRA	Khan, Zargham Ullah, Tania Arshad, and Naveed Alam. 2024. 'Effect of Celebrity Credibility on Brand Passion and Brand Loyalty', *Global Management Sciences Review*, IX: 59-75.					
	MLA	Khan, Zargham Ullah, Tania Arshad, and Naveed Alam. "Effect of Celebrity Credibility on Brand Passion and Brand Loyalty." *Global Management Sciences Review* IX.I (2024): 59-75. Print.					
	OXFORD	Khan, Zargham Ullah, Arshad, Tania, and Alam, Naveed (2024), 'Effect of Celebrity Credibility on Brand Passion and Brand Loyalty', *Global Management Sciences Review,* IX (I), 59-75.					
	TURABIAN	Khan, Zargham Ullah, Tania Arshad, and Naveed Alam. "Effect of Celebrity Credibility on Brand Passion and Brand Loyalty." *Global Management Sciences Review* IX, no. I (2024): 59-75. https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gmsr.2024(IX-I).07.					

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e-ISSN: 2708-2482 Volume: IX (2024) Issue: I-Winter (March-2024) p-ISSN: 2708-2474

Global Management Sciences Review
www.gmsrjournal.com
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gmsr

Pages: 59-75 URL: https://doi.org/10.31703/gmsr.2024(IX-I).07 Doi: 10.31703/gmsr.2024(IX-I).07

Title

Effect of Celebrity Credibility on Brand Passion and Brand Loyalty

Abstract

The objective of this study is to assess how celebrity credibility influences brand passion and brand loyalty. Various statistical techniques were employed, including structural equation modeling, descriptive analysis, correlation, regression, reliability, and frequency analyses. Findings revealed that for customers of clothing brands, the expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness of celebrity endorsers were crucial predictors of brand loyalty. Additionally, the study found that brand passion positively influenced brand loyalty. Furthermore, brand passion significantly and positively mediated the connection between brand loyalty and celebrity endorsers. This insight is beneficial for companies that do not use celebrities or company management in their brand promotion strategies. The study was purely quantitative, employing closed-ended questions with preset responses, which limited participants from offering feedback beyond the provided choices. Future studies might consider using a mixed-method approach.

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Contents

- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Research Methodology
- Situational Circumstances of the Selected Sub-registers
- Conclusion

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Introduction

Through mass media platforms such as the Internet and television, individuals can establish fan-star relationships with various celebrities that resemble their real-life relationships (Albert, Ambroise, & Valette-Florence, 2017; Kim et al., 2020). Humans have a natural inclination to interact with others and create social networks. Those who engage in fan communities or consume mass media featuring specific celebrities experience a form of alternative socialization that addresses unfulfilled psychological needs in their everyday interactions. These individuals expect that these parasocial interactions will help them manage psychological instability and compensate for emotional deficiencies (Lewis, 1992; Kim et al., 2020). Significantly, individuals develop emotional connections with certain celebrities, feeling annoyance or excitement from their content, empathizing with their situations, and finding enjoyment in consuming media content (Albert et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2020). Essentially, people's habits or behaviors related to celebrity brand consumption

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likely represent an extension of their pursuit of happiness, leading to joy, satisfaction, and enriching experiences through media consumption (Kim et al., 2020).

Celebrity endorsements involve well-known individuals promoting products to the general public (McCracken, 1989; Kim et al., 2020). According to current research, key factors such as physical attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness significantly impact a celebrity's ability to positively influence customer behaviors. These behaviors include brand recall, perception, attitude, and actual purchasing decisions (Amos, Holmes, & Strutton, 2008; Paul & Bhakar, 2017; Wang et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2020).

Research on customer-brand relationships has predominantly centered on the influence of customers' perceptions of product features on brand attitudes (Anwar, Gulzar, Sohail, & Akram, 2011; Liu, Mizerski, & Soh, 2012; Kim et al., 2020). However, there is increasing criticism that these perceptions do not entirely encompass the emotional or internal bonds between a brand and its customers (Baek & Ju, 2019; Kim et al., 2020). Brand passion, identified by researchers as an emotional response arising from customer-brand interactions, has been recognized as a critical factor in strengthening and cultivating brand loyalty. Conventional measures of product/brand attitudes are inadequate in accurately describing the depth of these relationships (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012; Garg, Mukherjee, Biswas, & Kataria, 2016; Gilal, Zhang, Gilal, & Gilal, 2018; Kim et al., 2020). Brand passion boosts consumer loyalty, making customers more willing to pay premium prices and fostering greater enthusiasm and intimacy for the brand (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012; Garg, Mukherjee, Biswas, & Kataria, 2016; Gilal, Zhang, Gilal, & Gilal, 2018; Kim et al., 2020; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Prior research on customer-brand relationships has identified elements such as brand experience (Batra et al., 2012), brand confidence (Merunka, Albert, & Valette-Florence, 2008; Kim et al., 2020), and brand recognition (Albert et al., 2017; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Kim et al., 2020) as precursors to brand passion.

Although celebrity credibility significantly affects brand passion and brand loyalty, research on this topic remains limited. Consequently, this study seeks to explore the impact of celebrity credibility on brand passion and brand loyalty.

Literature Review

Celebrity Attractiveness

The literature on celebrity endorsement has underscored the significance of celebrity attractiveness in enhancing the effectiveness of endorsements, even though attractiveness is a complex concept (Jain and Roy, 2016; Choi and Rifon, 2012; Chao et al., 2005). Erdogan (1999) pointed out that attractiveness encompasses more than just physical features; it also includes personality and athletic ability. Consumers generally prefer celebrities who are physically attractive over those who are less so (Chan et al., 2013). Previous studies have indicated that endorser attractiveness positively influences consumers' perceptions and evaluations of the product (Roy et al., 2013; Erdogan, 1999). Saldanha et al. (2018) found that when attractive celebrities endorse a brand, consumer loyalty to that brand increases. However, Baker and Churchill (1977), Caballero et al. (1989), and Zakari et al. (2019) argued that while attractive celebrities improve consumers' evaluations of advertisements, they have a limited impact on purchase intentions.

Since Dion et al. (1972, p. 285) asserted that "what is beautiful is good," both academic researchers and marketing practitioners have increasingly emphasized the significance of physical attractiveness. A considerable research body indicates that convincing and effective sales representatives and endorsers tend to be more alluring. For instance, in negotiating simulations, attractive negotiators receive higher offers compared to their less attractive counterparts (Solnick and Schweitzer, 1999; Felix et al., 2014). In car insurance sales pitches, potential customers are more inclined to purchase from attractive salespeople (DeShields et al., 1996; Felix et al., 2014). Attractive pharmaceutical sales representatives are perceived to possess superior communication skills, likeability, expertise, and trustworthiness (Ahearne et al., 1999; Felix et al., 2014). According to Reingen and Kernan (1993), customers tend to rate attractive salespeople more favorably in terms of skills and are more inclined to agree to their requests compared to those made by less attractive salespeople. Silvera and Austad (2004) found that in celebrity endorsements, higher ratings of the endorser's attractiveness lead to more positive attitudes toward the advertisement due to the endorser's favorable disposition. Kamins (1990) also noted that attractive celebrity endorsers positively impact the credibility of the endorser and consumer behavior toward the advertisement, especially for products related to attractiveness, such as high-performance cars or cosmetic items. Meta-analyses by Amos et al. (2008) and Felix et al. (2014) revealed that factors like celebrity competence, trustworthiness, and attractiveness significantly affect various measures of advertising effectiveness,

including attitudes toward the commercial, brand evaluations, and purchase intentions.

The initial impression people often form of you is based on your outward appearance, which is influenced by factors such as height, body weight, and facial characteristics (Bardia et al., 2010; Ha & Lam, 2017). This concept goes beyond mere physical appeal to include lifestyle, mental outlook, talent, and creativity (Erdogan, 1999; Ha & Lam, 2017). A celebrity's fame originates from their well-established public image. As individuals desire to emulate their favorite celebs, the celebrities' attractiveness enhances their convincingness (Cohen & Golden, 1972; Ha & Lam, 2017).

The perceived attractiveness of a celebrity endorser can significantly influence consumer perceptions. The effectiveness of a communication message is directly impacted by the source's attractiveness (McGuire, 1985; Wang et al., 2017). Attractive individuals who embody gracefulness, charm, or sophistication (Amos et al., 2008; McCracken, 1989; Ohanian, 1991; Wang et al., 2018) are often perceived as attractive. Research indicates that attributes such as likability, familiarity, and similarity contribute to a person's attractiveness (McGuire, 1969; Wang et al., 2018). "Similarity" refers to the perceived resemblance between the endorser and the consumer. "Familiarity" is the consumer's knowledge of the endorser, often gained through frequent media exposure. Likability, as defined by McGuire (1969) and Wang et al. (2018), the consumer's favorable opinion of the endorser is shaped by their qualifications, conduct, and appearance. These factors combine to enhance the overall attractiveness of the endorser.

As such, customers are more inclined to trust information from a credible source (Kelman, 1961). Additionally, an appealing source can influence a customer's intention to make a purchase (Erdogan, 1999; Joseph, 1982; Petroshius and Crocker, 1989; Petty et al., 1983). The presence of an attractive celebrity can have a positive impact on purchase intentions and brand attitude (Kahle and Homer, 1985). The authors suggested that how consumers perceive the attractiveness of a celebrity endorser would improve their attitude toward the endorsed brand, regardless of the product category. This prediction is grounded in the source-credibility theory and relevant literature (Wang et al., 2018).

Celebrity Expertise

Celebrity endorser expertise is defined as "the extent to which the communicator is perceived as a source of valid claims" (Erdogan, 1999, p. 298). Research on the credibility of sources in persuasive communication indicates that message recipients are more likely to view the source favorably if they perceive them as knowledgeable (Ohanian, 1990). When it comes to recommendations, target respondents react differently based on their perception of the celebrity's expertise. Endorsements are more effective when the celebrity is perceived to have substantial experience. The effectiveness of celebrity endorsers is linked to the perceived level of their expertise, which can significantly influence consumers' purchase intentions, according to the source credibility model (Ohanian, 1991; Batra et al., 1996; Till and Busler, 2000; Zakari et al., 2019).

Expertise, as defined by Hovland et al. (1951), signifies the highest level of acknowledged validity within a particular field of knowledge and experience that an individual can achieve. A celebrity's perceived expertise enhances purchasing decisions (Aaker, 1997; Ohanian, 1991). Speck, Schumann, and Thompson (1988) suggest that a celebrity with expertise in a specific area is perceived as more authoritative and thus more effective in endorsing brands compared to one lacking such expertise (Hoekman & Bosmans, 2010; Ha & Lam, 2016).

"Expertise" denotes the degree to which an endorser is perceived to possess specific understanding, skills, and knowledge (Hovland, Janis, and Kelley, 1953; Wang et al., 2018). The endorser's level of expertise significantly affects their ability to persuade customers to purchase the endorsed product, akin to the qualifications of the source. Studies conducted by Till and Busler (2000) and Wang et al. (2018) suggest that expertise has a positive impact on purchase intention and brand attitude.

Celebrity Trustworthiness

Ohanian (1990) described trustworthiness as a source's capacity to evoke a client's confidence in the credibility of their claims. Current literature on celebrity endorsers indicates that trustworthiness is a crucial factor for the success of celebrity endorsements. Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) and Dwivedi et al. (2015) propose that individuals are more inclined to heed advice from celebrities they perceive as trustworthy. As a result, marketers select celebrities who are seen as credible, dependable, and truthful. Erdogmus et al. (2016) and Zakari et al. (2019) research indicate that while attractive celebrities have a substantial impact on the marketing of durable products, reliable celebrities are more effective in endorsing non-durable products.

The concept of trustworthiness, or the level of trust attributed to a person, is crucial both in theory

and practice. According to Friedman et al. (1976), "perceived trustworthiness" includes qualities such as honesty, believability, and dignity that consumers attribute to endorsers. When customers perceive a source as trustworthy, they also consider the information being communicated as highly credible (Hovland and Weiss, 1951). Effectively promoting a brand can involve partnering with celebrities who are perceived as trustworthy, credible, and truthful by the public. Moreover, a consumer's heightened perception of a celebrity's trustworthiness can enhance the effectiveness of the endorsement (Choo, 1964; Horai, Naccari, and Fatoullah, 1974; Hovland and Weiss, 1951; Mishra, Subhadip, and Bailey, 2015). This approach to celebrity endorsement is referred to as "meaning transfer" in earlier studies (Roy, 2016; Wang et al., 2018).

Research indicates a relationship between dependability and perceived expertise (Erdem and Swait, 2004). The significant correlations between expertise and trustworthiness are evident in frequently studied product categories such as in packaged goods, sporting goods, and fashion (Erdem and Swait, 2004), higher levels of expertise are associated with increased trustworthiness. Wang et al. (2018) proposed that consumers perceive celebrity endorsers as more reliable when they are seen to possess expertise in the relevant field, regardless of the specific product category or industry.

Trustworthiness is defined as "the honesty, integrity, and believability of an endorser" (Erdogan et al., 2001, p. 40). Goldsmith et al. (2000) noted that celebrities are viewed as trustworthy, with trustworthiness comprising various characteristics that enhance positive perceptions and increase the acceptability of the message (Erdogan, 1999). Establishing a brand's credibility is the most effective way to enhance consumer confidence and dependability (Ohanian, 1990; Ha and Lam, 2016).

Influence of Celebrity Credibility on Brand Passion

Brands gain from associating with celebrities when customers can relate to those celebrities. Customers are particularly drawn to highly credible celebrities because they form an emotional bond with them (Basil, 1996). The credibility of a celebrity endorser is judged by consumers based on three factors: expertise, which includes the endorser's knowledge, skills, and experience; attractiveness, which encompasses physical attributes such as weight, height, and overall beauty; and trustworthiness (Erdem & Swait, 2004; Magnini, Honeycutt, & Cross, 2008; Kim et al., 2020). According to Albert et al. (2017), Carlson & Donavan (2008), and Kim et al. (2020), "the primary factors influencing consumers' development of a positive attitude toward celebrities are their attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness."

These characteristics—expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness—are critical sources of information that significantly influence message persuasion and impact consumers' responses to brands endorsed by celebrities. Celebrities are often perceived by consumers as aspirational reference groups, leading them to emulate their attitudes and behaviors, thereby developing positive attitudes and intentions to repurchase endorsed brands (Brison et al., 2016; Carlson & Donavan, 2008). Carlson and Donavan (2008) suggest that fans of celebrities demonstrate a desire to belong to their reference group and identify with the celebrity endorser by exhibiting favorable attitudes toward and purchasing products endorsed by well-known celebrities.

Hypothesis: Celebrity endorser attractiveness positively influences brand passion.

Hypothesis: Celebrity endorser expertise positively influences brand passion.

Hypothesis*:* Celebrity endorser trustworthiness positively influences brand passion.

Brand Passion and Brand Loyalty

The concept of "brand passion" signifies the strong connection between consumers and brands (Huber et al., 2016). Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) defined brand love as "the degree of passionate, emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name." Marketers have indicated that prioritizing the development of an emotional connection with customers, rather than just emphasizing the brand's distinctive selling points, can be more effective, is beneficial (Trivedi, 2020). Consequently, brand love is regarded as a more influential affective variable compared to brand attitude and preference (Karjaluoto et al., 2016; Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005). Customer experience, psychological attachment, brand trust, brand attitude, and the hedonic value associated with a brand are considered essential factors leading to brand love (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Batra et al., 2012; Sarkar & Sarkar, 2012; Trivedi, 2019). Similarly, research indicates that brand love results in various positive outcomes, including purchase intentions, willingness to pay a premium, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and brand loyalty (Roberts, 2006; Roy, Eshghi, & Sarkar, 2013).

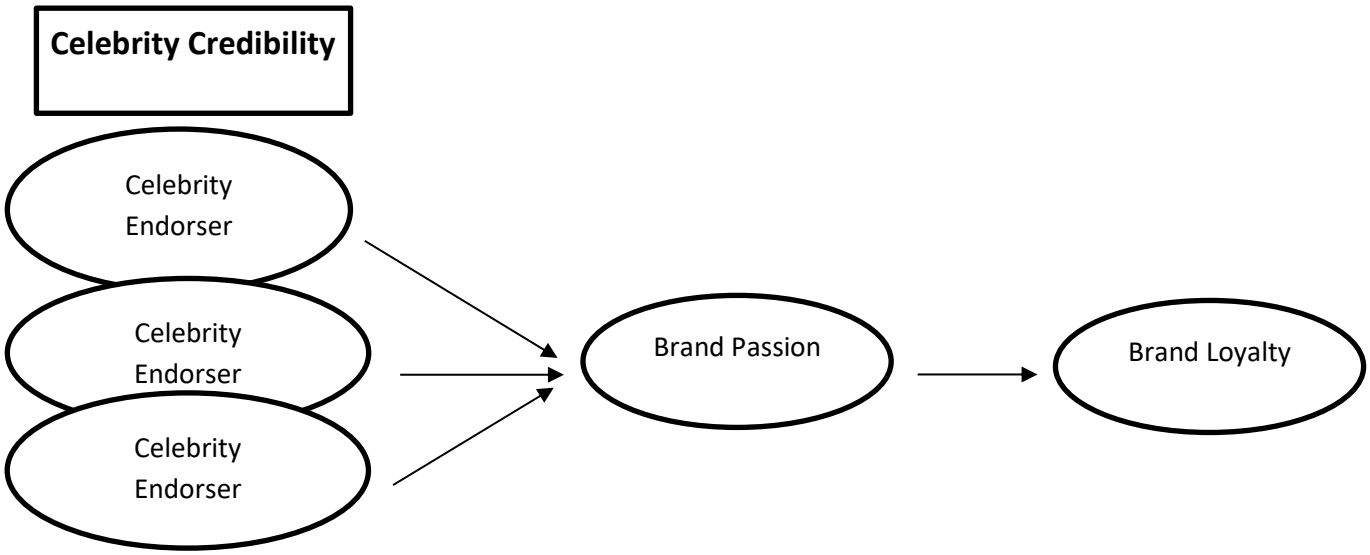
More research is required to fully comprehend the role of brand love in shaping consumer-brand relationships, given its status as a relatively new concept (Roy et al., 2013). Further investigations are also necessary to identify current antecedents in different contexts and to uncover new ones (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Fetscherin, 2014; M. S. Kim & Kim, 2018). Brand passion can be used to measure customers' affective response to a brand (Karjaluoto et al., 2016; Roy et al., 2013). According to a recent study by Zhang, Xu, and Gursoy (2020), a strong and positive correlation between potential tourists' passion for a destination and the attributes of celebrities, particularly in the context of a restaurant owned by a celebrity, it is expected that brand affection will be positively associated with both the credibility and attractiveness of the celebrity. Thus, the hypothesis arises here:

Hypothesis: The credibility of a celebrity is positively linked to brand passion.

Hypothesis: Brand passion positively impacts brand loyalty.

Research Framework

Figure 1



Methodology

Data Collection

This study gathered primary data over a two-week period from 310 customers who wear branded clothing in a specific area. The questionnaire was distributed to participants online. Convenience sampling was employed to collect data from respondents, selected through non-probability sampling. The study is based on the positivist paradigm and utilizes a deductive methodology. A quantitative approach was used, involving a structured questionnaire will be utilized for data collection and analysis.

Instrument

The researcher developed a survey consisting of 24 items, with 7 focusing on demographic information, drawing on prior research, the proposal includes five variables: celebrity endorser attractiveness, celebrity endorser expertise, celebrity endorser trustworthiness, brand passion, and customer loyalty. The customer-conducted version of the study is identified as the most appropriate source for this research.

Table 1

Variable	Number of Items	Source
Celebrity Endorser Attractiveness	3	(Kim et al., 2020)
Celebrity Endorser Expertise	3	(Kim et al., 2020)
Celebrity Endorser Trustworthiness	5	(Ha & Lam, 2017)
Brand Passion	3	(Kim et al., 2020)

Variable	Number of Items	Source
Customer Loyalty	3	(Kim et al., 2020)

Data Analysis

The researcher utilized various statistical analyses, including descriptive statistics, reliability tests, correlation studies, regression analysis, frequency analysis, path analysis, structural equation modeling (SEM), and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using SPSS 23.0 and AMOS 23.0. CFA was employed for each variable to evaluate the fit of the predicted model, assessing metrics such as goodness-of-fit (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit (AGFI), comparative fit index (CFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA).

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Factor	Category	Frequency (F)
Gender		
	Female	163 (52.6%)
	Male	147 (47.4%)
Marital Status		
	Married	109 (35.2%)
	Single	201 (64.8%)
Age		
	20 or less	9 (2.9%)
	21-24	73 (23.5%)
	25-29	160 (51.6%)
	30-39	68 (21.9%)
	40 and above	0 (0%)
Qualification		
	Matric	5 (1.6%)
	Intermediate	27 (8.7%)
	Graduation	150 (48.4%)
	Master	124 (40%)
	PhD	4 (1.3%)
Occupation		
	Student	17 (5.5%)
	Business Working	52 (16.8%)
	Job	172 (55.5%)
	Professional	69 (22.3%)
Monthly Income		
	25,000 or less	14 (4.5%)
	25,001-50,000	21 (6.8%)
	50,001-75,000	48 (15.5%)
	75,001-100,000	141 (45.5%)
	More than 100,000	86 (27.7%)

Table 3

Favorite Clothing Brands Among Participants

Brand	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Adidas	8	2.6%	2.6%	2.6%
Alkaram	8	2.6%	2.6%	5.2%
Alkaram, Charcoal	1	0.3%	0.3%	5.5%
Amir Adnan	2	0.6%	0.6%	6.1%
Bereeze	4	1.3%	1.3%	7.4%
Beachtree	7	2.3%	2.3%	9.7%
Bonanza	5	1.6%	1.6%	11.3%

Brand	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Breeze	10	3.2%	3.2%	14.5%
Breeze, Charizma	1	0.3%	0.3%	14.8%
Breeze, Maria B	1	0.3%	0.3%	15.2%
Breeze, Sapphire	1	0.3%	0.3%	15.5%
Breeze, Sapphire	2	0.6%	0.6%	16.1%
Charcoal	10	3.2%	3.2%	19.4%
Charcoal, Outfitters	2	0.6%	0.6%	20.0%
Charizma	20	6.5%	6.5%	26.5%
Chester Bernard	1	0.3%	0.3%	26.8%
Devis	1	0.3%	0.3%	27.1%
Diners	2	0.6%	0.6%	27.7%
Dyot	9	2.9%	2.9%	30.6%
Engine	5	1.6%	1.6%	32.3%
Engine, Alkaram	1	0.3%	0.3%	32.6%
Engine, Alkaram, Outfitters	1	0.3%	0.3%	32.9%
Engine, Ideas	1	0.3%	0.3%	33.2%
Engine, Khaadi	1	0.3%	0.3%	33.5%
Engine, Outfitters	2	0.6%	0.6%	34.2%
Engine, Outfitters, Alkaram	1	0.3%	0.3%	34.5%
Ethnic	5	1.6%	1.6%	36.1%
Generation	6	1.9%	1.9%	38.1%
Gucci	16	5.2%	5.2%	43.2%
Gul Ahmed	10	3.2%	3.2%	46.5%
Ideas	7	2.3%	2.3%	48.7%
Ideas, Engine	1	0.3%	0.3%	49.0%
Ideas, Engine, Outfitters, Charcoal	1	0.3%	0.3%	49.4%
Ideas, Khaadi	1	0.3%	0.3%	49.7%
Junaid Jamshed	8	2.6%	2.6%	52.3%
Khaadi	15	4.8%	4.8%	57.1%
Khaadi, Charcoal	1	0.3%	0.3%	57.4%
Khaadi, Charizma	1	0.3%	0.3%	57.7%
Khaadi, Maria B, Sapphire	1	0.3%	0.3%	58.1%
Khaadi, Outfitters	1	0.3%	0.3%	58.4%
Khaadi, Stoneage	1	0.3%	0.3%	58.7%
Levi's Pakistan	12	3.9%	3.9%	62.6%
Limelight	22	7.1%	7.1%	69.7%
Maria B	11	3.5%	3.5%	73.2%
Mark's & Spencer	1	0.3%	0.3%	73.5%
Nike	12	3.9%	3.9%	77.4%
No Preference	1	0.3%	0.3%	77.7%
Outfitters	13	4.2%	4.2%	81.9%
Prada	4	1.3%	1.3%	83.2%
Sana Safinaz	2	0.6%	0.6%	83.9%
Sana Safinaz, Breeze	1	0.3%	0.3%	84.2%
Sapphire	31	10.0%	10.0%	94.2%
Sapphire, Bareeze	1	0.3%	0.3%	94.5%
Sapphire, Charizma	2	0.6%	0.6%	95.2%
Sapphire, Chorizma	1	0.3%	0.3%	95.5%
Sapphire, Limelight	2	0.6%	0.6%	96.1%
Stoneage	1	0.3%	0.3%	96.5%
Uniworth	6	1.9%	1.9%	98.4%
Zeen	2	0.6%	0.6%	99.0%
Zeen, Khaadi	1	0.3%	0.3%	99.4%
Zelbery	2	0.6%	0.6%	100.0%

Brand	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Total	310	100%	100%	100%

Figure 2

Demographics Bar Chart

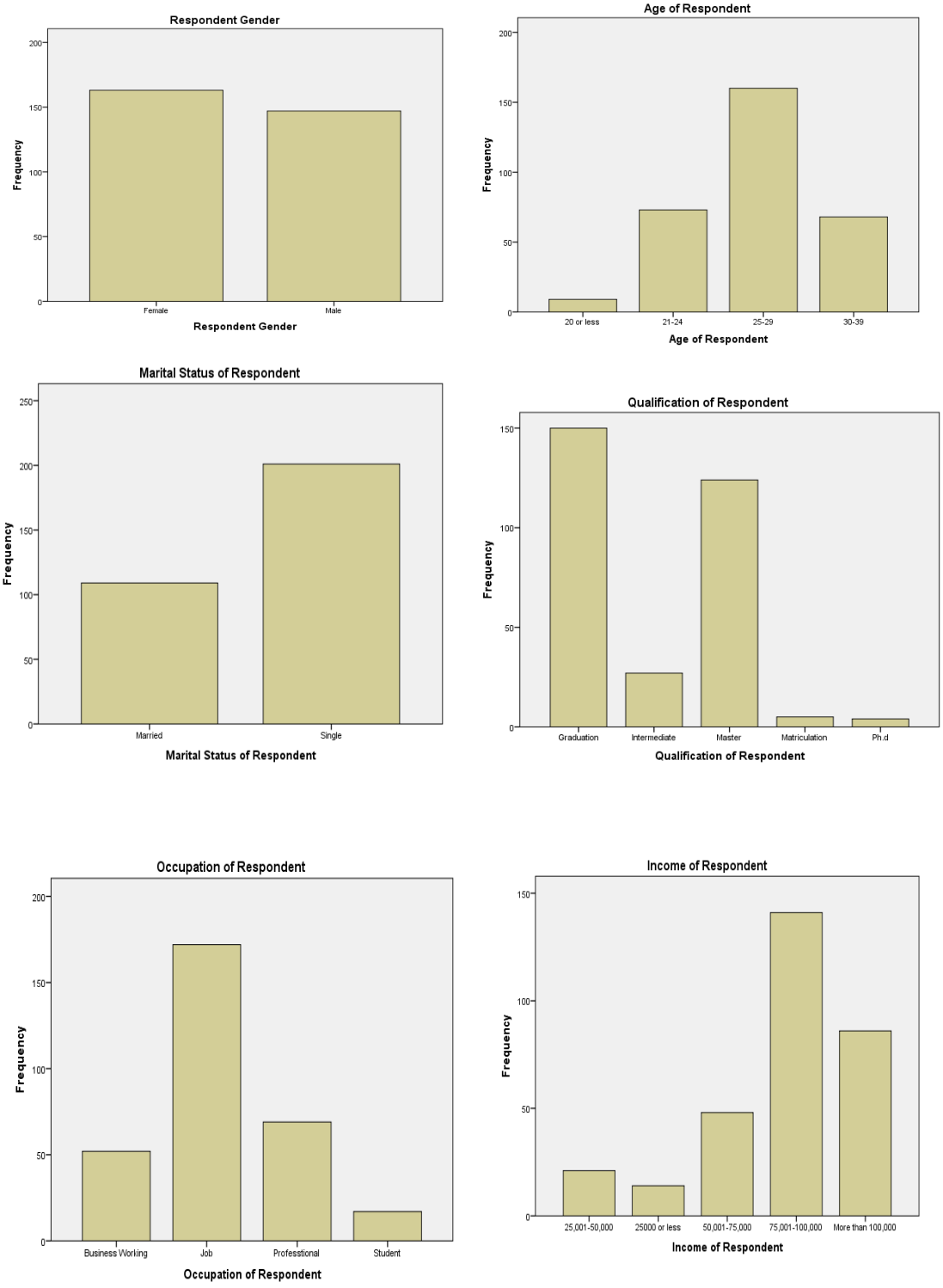


Figure 3

The first bar chart depicts the gender distribution of the survey respondents, indicating a higher number of female participants compared to male participants. The second bar chart presents the age distribution, showing that the majority of respondents are between the ages of 25 and 29, while those aged 20 or younger constitute the smallest group. Respondents aged 21-24 and 30-39 fall into a moderate range. The third bar chart highlights the marital status, revealing a significantly higher proportion of single respondents compared to married ones. The fourth bar chart depicts the educational qualifications of the respondents, with graduates and master's degree holders outnumbering those with matriculation, intermediate, or PhD degrees. The fifth bar chart categorizes respondents by occupation, showing that students are less likely to respond, whereas the majority of respondents are job holders. The sixth bar chart examines income levels, demonstrating that most respondents fall within the 75,001 to 100,000 range, with fewer respondents in the 25,000 or less bracket. Respondents with incomes between 25,001-50,000, 50,001-75,000, and over 100,000 are moderately represented. Finally, the seventh bar chart shows the preferred clothing brands of respondents, with Sapphire being the most favored, while Zelbury, Zeen, and Pairs brands are less preferred, and others fall into a moderate preference range.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics

Measure	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Std. Error (Skewness)	Kurtosis	Std. Error (Kurtosis)
CEA	310	4.00	1.00	5.00	892.00	2.8774	0.86151	0.742	-0.182	0.138	-0.324	0.276
CEE	310	4.00	1.00	5.00	838.33	2.7043	0.91278	0.833	-0.193	0.138	-0.519	0.276
CET	310	4.00	1.00	5.00	824.00	2.6581	0.85172	0.725	-0.025	0.138	-0.517	0.276
BP	310	3.00	1.33	4.33	955.00	3.0806	0.98476	0.970	-0.178	0.138	-1.115	0.276

BL	310	4.00	1.00	5.00	1221.33	3.9398	1.04791	1.098	-0.637	0.138	-0.740	0.276
Valid N (listwise)	310										

The study's descriptive statistics include range (R), minimum (Min), maximum (Max), sum (S), mean (M), standard deviation (SD), variance (V), skewness, and kurtosis. Data were collected from 310 respondents. The descriptive statistics for celebrity endorser attractiveness (CEA) are as follows: R=4.00, Min=1.00, Max=5.00, S=892.00, M=2.8774, SD=.86151, V=.742, Skewness=-.182, and Kurtosis=-.324. For celebrity endorser expertise (CEE), the values are R=4.00, Min=1.00, Max=5.00, S=838.33, M=2.7043, SD=.91278, V=.833, Skewness=-.193, and Kurtosis=-.519. The statistics for celebrity endorser trustworthiness (CET) are R=4.00, Min=1.00, Max=5.00, S=824.00, M=2.6581, SD=.85172, V=.725, Skewness=-.025, and Kurtosis=-.517. Brand passion (BP) shows the following: R=3.00, Min=1.33, Max=4.33, S=955.00, M=3.0806, SD=.98476, V=.970, Skewness=-.178, and Kurtosis=-1.115. For brand loyalty (BL), the values are R=4.00, Min=1.00, Max=5.00, S=1221.33, M=3.9398, SD=1.04791, V=1.098, Skewness=-.637, and Kurtosis=-.740.

The skewness and kurtosis values, which fall between -1 and +1, suggest that the data is normal and suitable for regression analysis. These results indicate that respondents generally hold positive views regarding celebrities' attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, and enthusiasm towards their brands.

Table 5

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.686	5

Table 6

Case Processing Overview

	N	%
Cases		
Valid	310	100.0%
Excluded a	0	0.0
Total	310	100.0

Listwise deletion was applied to all variables in the analysis.

Table 7

Item Analysis

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
CEA	2.8774	0.86151	310
CEE	2.7043	0.91278	310
CET	2.6581	0.85172	310
BP	3.0806	0.98476	310
BL	3.9398	1.04791	310

Table 8

Item-Total Analysis

	Scale Mean if Item Removed	Scale Variance if Item Removed	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Removed
CEA	12.3828	6.496	0.555	0.589
CEE	12.5559	6.821	0.424	0.642
CET	12.6022	7.122	0.402	0.651

BP	12.1796	6.142	0.525	0.595
BL	11.3204	6.814	0.322	0.693

The researcher evaluated 310 valid cases. With a Cronbach's alpha of 0.686, which is near 0.7, the findings are deemed to be reliable and precise.

Table 9

Correlation Analysis

Constructs	CEA	CEE	CET	BP	BL
Pearson Correlation					
Celebrity Endorser Attractiveness	1				
Celebrity Endorser Expertise	0.363**	1			
Celebrity Endorser Trustworthiness	0.396**	0.324**	1		
Brand Passion	0.461**	0.308**	0.329**	1	
Brand Loyalty	0.279**	0.205**	0.107	0.328**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The p-value is 0.000, which is below the threshold of 0.01, indicating a statistically significant relationship. The correlation between CEA and CEE is .363**, showing a positive and significant relationship. Similarly, CEA and CET have a positive and significant correlation with a value of .396**. The relationship between CEA and BP is also positive and significant, with a value of .461**. There is a significant positive relationship (.279**) between CEA and BL. The correlation between CEE and CET is strong and positive at .324**. CEE and BP show a strong positive correlation at .308**, while CEE and BL have a noticeably positive correlation at .205**. CET and BP have a strong positive correlation of .329**, and CET and BL show a positive correlation of .107. BP and BL also have a positively significant correlation at .328**. All these correlations are positive and significant, as indicated by the two stars, meaning that each correlation coefficient is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 10

Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	0.301a	0.091	0.082	1.00416

a. Predictors: (Constant), CET, CEE, CEA

The model summary table results reveal that celebrity credibility (beauty, knowledge, and reliability) accounts for a 9.1% change in brand passion and brand loyalty, as indicated by the R-Square value of 0.091.

Table 11

ANOVA Analysis

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares
Regression	30.767
Residual	308.553
Total	339.320

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty (BL)

b. Predictors: (Constant), Celebrity Endorser Trustworthiness (CET), Celebrity Endorser Expertise (CEE), Celebrity Endorser Attractiveness (CEA)

The ANOVA table results indicate a robust and significant correlation between celebrity credibility (attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness) and both brand loyalty and brand passion, as evidenced by a p-value of 0.000b, which is below the 0.05 threshold.

Table 12

Regression Coefficients

	B
Constant	2.793
CET	0.298
CEE	0.144
CEA	-0.038

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty (BL)

The coefficients table shows the beta value for celebrity endorser attractiveness (CEA) is .245, suggesting that a one-unit increase in CEA leads to a 0.245 unit increase in brand loyalty. For celebrity endorser expertise (CEE), the beta value is .125, indicating that a one-unit increase in CEE results in a 0.125-unit increase in brand loyalty. These positive beta values signify a positive correlation between brand loyalty and both CEA and CEE. Conversely, the beta value for celebrity endorser trustworthiness (CET) is -.031, implying that a one-unit decrease in CET results in a corresponding .031 unit increase in brand loyalty. This negative beta value indicates a weak correlation between brand loyalty and CET.

Path Analysis

The table demonstrates that brand passion plays a significant positive mediating role in the relationship between endorser attractiveness and brand loyalty. Moreover, brand passion has a somewhat favorable mediating effect on the relationship between brand loyalty and the trustworthiness and expertise of celebrity endorsers.

Table 13

Hypothesized Path

	Path		Hypothesis	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Results
BP	<---	CEA	H1	.344	.065	5.264	***	Supported
BP	<---	CEE	H2	.084	.060	1.404	.160	Not Supported
BP	<---	CET	H3	.099	.066	1.504	.133	Not Supported
BL	<---	BP	H4	.241	.066	3.664	***	Supported
BL	<---	CEA	H5	.155	.079	1.964	.049	Supported
BL	<---	CET	H6	-.129	.076	-1.693	.090	Not Supported
BL	<---	CEE	H7	.067	.069	.969	.332	Not Supported

Discussion

The objective of this study was to investigate the connections among celebrity endorser attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, brand passion, and brand loyalty among consumers of clothing brands. The results showed that the attractiveness of celebrity endorsers had a significant impact on brand passion among consumers of endorsed brands. However, the trustworthiness and expertise of celebrity endorsers did not significantly influence brand passion.

Celebrity Attractiveness

As H1 is statistically significant, it is both accepted and supported. These findings are consistent with prior research by Paul and Bhakar (2018) and Gilal, Paul, Gilal, and Gilal (2020), which concluded that the attractiveness of a source is a critical predictor of customer satisfaction regarding relatedness needs and brand attitude, ultimately positively impacting their enthusiasm for a brand endorsed by a celebrity. This phenomenon may occur because consumers often perceive products endorsed by well-known celebrities as high-quality, even if their actual performance or quality does not surpass that of competing brands (Paul & Bhakar, 2018). Since physical attractiveness is a potent tool for capturing consumer attention in mass media and advertisements, it is reasonable to suggest that the appeal of celebrity endorsers significantly influences consumer brand passion. When consumers perceive a positive correlation between an endorser's physical attributes and the brand, they are more likely to view the brand as credible and develop a stronger affinity for it.

Celebrity Expertise

Since this variable lacks statistical significance, the H2 hypothesis is not supported. The findings of this study indicate that there is no significant correlation between brand passion among clothing brand consumers and the expertise of celebrity endorsers. These findings are in contrast to the conclusions drawn by Jeng (2016) and Amos et al. (2008). Albert et al. (2017) discovered that customers' perceptions of advertisements and products do not significantly improve when the endorsement reputation of a celebrity aligns with the product features. Consequently, customers are less likely to give a favorable review to a brand when they perceive a match between the brand's expertise and that of a celebrity endorser. The study's findings thus suggest that consumers do not develop increased passion for brands when celebrities endorse them. Brand passion is only minimally affected by the expertise of celebrity endorsers in the context of clothing brands, and this does not lead to increased loyalty.

Celebrity Trustworthiness

Since the statistical significance of this variable is not supported, the H3 hypothesis is not substantiated. Trustworthiness is defined as "an endorser's honesty, integrity, and believability" (Erdogan et al., 2001). Celebrities are often perceived as trustworthy individuals (Goldsmith et al., 2000). However, Pham & Nguyen's study in 2015 claims that "celebrity trustworthiness" does not have beneficial effects. Moreover, the findings of this study indicated that "celebrity trustworthiness" did not positively influence "brand passion and brand loyalty." Thus, this research demonstrates that the credibility of celebrity endorsements does not significantly impact brand passion and brand loyalty.

Brand Passion

Furthermore, the study's findings suggest that customer passion for clothing brands significantly predicts brand loyalty. This observation is consistent with research by Sarkar et al. (2012) and Cheon and Kim (2011), who noted a correlation between positive reviews and a desire for future purchases, as well as between brand loyalty and passion. According to the study's results, customers who are more passionate about their clothing brands are more likely to exhibit brand loyalty. Brand passion, which is driven by emotions rather than cognitive functions, can exceed the passion for any other entity, including close friends or relatives (Ruane & Wallace, 2015; Kim et al., 2020). Mass media may foster brand passion and subsequently brand loyalty by reducing brand uncertainty and increasing intimacy.

It is conceivable that all individuals have a fundamental psychological need for relatedness, and when this need is fulfilled, a strong emotional bond forms with the relevant entity (Lewis, 2004; Gilal et al., 2020). Specifically, when a well-known celebrity is involved in this emotional connection, the brand endorsement can benefit from the celebrity's positive attributes—such as beauty and likability—which strengthens the emotional bond with the customer and enhances brand loyalty (McCracken, 1989). Overall, the study's findings revealed that when consumers positively perceive a celebrity's attractiveness, brand passion significantly mediates the relationship between brand loyalty and endorser attractiveness. However, the relationship between brand loyalty and the expertise and trustworthiness of celebrity endorsers is insignificantly mediated by brand passion.

Implication of the Study

Theoretical Implication

This study has both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, it aims to fill a gap in the existing literature by investigating the relationship between brand loyalty and endorsers' trustworthiness. It seeks to contribute to the literature by exploring the mediating role of brand passion in the connection between brand loyalty and endorser trustworthiness. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this is the first study to provide comprehensive insights into an endorser's trustworthiness, attractiveness, expertise, brand passion, and brand loyalty within a single study.

Practically, this study is significant because it investigates how a celebrity endorser's credibility influences brand passion. It stands out by analyzing the effect of celebrity trustworthiness on brand passion and loyalty. The findings suggest that the credibility of celebrity endorsers enhances brand passion and loyalty.

Practical Implication

Practically, the study's findings will benefit businesses that do not rely on celebrities to promote their products. Top management will gain a better understanding of the importance of celebrity endorsement for their brands. The study's results should encourage business managers to develop strategies that adapt to a changing environment.

For marketers in the apparel sector, the study's conclusions have significant applications. The research indicates that the attractiveness of celebrity endorsers is the most critical factor in increasing and enhancing customer brand passion. This implies that physical attractiveness significantly enhances brand passion and, consequently, brand loyalty for a celebrity endorser. The primary discovery of this study is the significant impact of brand passion on consumer brand loyalty. This implies that consumers of clothing brands are more inclined to develop passion and loyalty towards a brand when they perceive the celebrity endorser as attractive. Therefore, marketers in the apparel industry should focus on securing endorsers who are both likable and visually appealing. It is crucial for marketing professionals to prioritize the alignment between the celebrity and the product rather than solely considering the celebrity's fame when selecting an endorser.

Limitations & Future Direction

There are several limitations to the current study. The small sample size may affect the generalizability of the research findings. Despite this, the insights gathered from this study provide a solid foundation for further research in various contexts and will be valuable for marketers aiming to effectively leverage celebrity endorsements. Data was collected online from a small sample of respondents within a short timeframe. As such, one of the significant drawbacks of this study is the use of the convenience sampling technique, which impacts the ability to generalize the findings.

Respondents for the study were consumers of clothing brands. Therefore, caution should be exercised when extrapolating the findings to other customer segments within the clothing brand market. It would be beneficial to conduct follow-up studies that include these other segments. Additionally, the study is entirely quantitative, relying on closed-ended questions with predefined answers, which prevents respondents from expressing views that do not fit into the provided categories. Future research could consider factors such as willingness to pay a higher price and word-of-mouth communication.

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